

SOCIAL ACTION

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Political Argument

1944 CAMPAIGN NUMBER

Candidates and Issues—W. E. Binkley

Marks of a Christian in Politics

By DONALD FRAZIER

Protestant Political Action

By TOM KEEHN and
K. W. UNDERWOOD

SOCIAL ACTION Magazine

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The cover painting *Political Argument* (courtesy of Bobbs-Merrill) and three of the cartoons used in this issue were done by one of America's best known marine painters, J. D. Whiting, whose interest in politics and international affairs has led him to collaborate in this issue.

Social Action Magazine wishes to acknowledge the years of valuable service of Noble S. Elderkin, retiring chairman of the Council for Social Action, and to welcome his worthy successor John C. Bennett.

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It Would Profit Every American*

By RONALD BRIDGES

It would profit every American to read the two thoughtful articles by Wilfred E. Binkley and Donald Frazier. A lot of us Congregationalists seem to have our minds made up already. I think it will do us good to unmake them and review the issues dispassionately as set forth here. For here is an effort rare in political seasons to look on a campaign with honesty and good will. The third article is a useful report on political activity among church groups in general.

I admit of feeling uneasiness when I learned of the new emphasis on political responsibility ventured by the Council for Social Action. Nor was my apprehension quieted by reading the occasional newspaper headline, "Congregational Church Goes into Politics." Of course the CSA means well—it always has meant well. But I wondered just what appearance this impartial education was going to have. There is a story, a canard I feel sure, about a Maine county chairman who undertook to give directions on how to split the ticket. "They's just one simple thing to bear in mind," he said. "Don't *never* vote for a Dimmocrat." Impartiality is as simple as that for some people, good people, too, with college degrees and some experience.

To my mind Mr. Binkley has achieved an impartiality seldom seen in discussing issues and candidates. Mr. Frazier has gone on to proclaim a standard of Christian citizenship and call us to it. And Mr. Keehn and Mr. Underwood have reminded us that Congregationalists are not the only good people to feel restive politically.

There are moral issues in every phase of political life, and they are not often to be found conveniently grouped to help a man to an easy decision. Because decision comes hard, we have developed comfortable ways of ignoring or by-passing the moral issues. Some of us just go along with the party pretend-

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*Mr. Ronald Bridges speaks to *Social Action* readers as the Moderator of the Congregational Christian Churches and as a Christian who takes an active part in the politics of Maine and of the nation.

Candidates and Issues

By WILFRED E. BINKLEY

A shrewd observer of the American political scene suggests that a major political party attempts to play in "true earnest the game of being the state." That is to say, both the Democratic and Republican parties in their platforms endeavor to capture and express the blurred, composite opinion of the nation. Each party is trying to recruit its ranks from every social, economic, religious and ethnic group and thus to make its membership approximately a cross-section of American society. Naturally the differences within each major party are greater than the differences between the parties themselves. Since both platforms attempt to portray the same scenery, the resemblances of the resulting pictures are always more striking than the differences. Cynical critics have expressed their disgust with the remark that the platforms represent the difference between

DR. WILFRED E. BINKLEY is best known to readers as the author of the recent book *American Political Parties*, which won the Alfred A. Knopf Literary Fellowship in History. As professor of political science at Ohio Northern University and as the author of two other books on the American political scene, Dr. Binkley has been a continuous investigator of the kind of leaders and campaign issues the exigencies of party politics produce.

Dr. Binkley is deeply interested in the influence of the Church on the nation's politics. He is a member of the United Lutheran Church in America. His youngest son is studying for the ministry.

Dr. Binkley has many significant things to say in this article about the future of the Republican Party and the divergent elements which make up the Democratic political strength.



Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee. Nevertheless somewhat different images of the state are projected by our major party platforms, as we shall see from an examination of the Republican and Democratic platforms of the 1944 campaign.

Congress Is A Broken Mirror

One cannot hope to capture the party ideology by studying the party votes in Congress. Here one gets no clear-cut composite of party or national opinion but rather the results of the concurrences and balances of the dominant sectional, regional and neighborhood sentiments and interests as they impinge upon the harassed congressmen. It is far less satisfactory than a party platform as an indication of the party program. It might be appropriate to paraphrase a remark of the French statesman, Gambetta, concerning the Chamber of Deputies and say: "Congress is a broken mirror in which the United States cannot recognize its own image."

The Significance of Party Platforms

Unlike congressmen the party platform committees come face to face with the pressures of the various interest groups on the national instead of the regional or local level. The American Federation of Labor, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and various other organizations through their agents appear before the platform committees of both major parties and urge, plead for, or insist upon adherence to their respective demands and the insertion of appropriate planks in the platforms. The worried committees working the clock around hurriedly calculate party losses and gains while rejecting, including or crudely compromising the proposed planks. Under such circumstances the answer to the inquiry as to why platforms do not set forth clear-cut statements of issues ought to be evident enough. They would not be honest statements of party views. The clash of interests represented in a major party

convention cannot be accurately represented in a crystal-clear statement. A neat platform might be the product of a bossed convention or dictated by a pre-determined presidential candidate.

It must never for a moment be forgotten that the mightiest motivating factor in the origin and perpetuation of our two party system is the quadrennial struggle to capture the enormous stakes of power—both of patronage and of policies— inherent in the presidential office. For the sake of victory a party will do much and go far, as the product of every platform committee reveals. Its problem is to gather within the fold of the party a combination of divergent social groups. The result is not the "broken mirror" reflected by Congress but the projection of a blurred image—one never quite in focus.

The Importance of Public Opinion Polls

The failure of newspapers as accurate registers of public opinion has practically compelled the search for better barometers of that important matter. One answer is the recent development of organizations specializing in scientific nation-wide sampling of public opinion on current issues. Among them are the American Institute of Public Opinion, better known as the Gallup poll, the National Opinion Research Center, the Office of Public Opinion Research and the *Fortune* Poll.* To those familiar with the law of averages there is nothing mysterious about these polls. They merely demonstrate that it is possible to get a more accurate measure of public sentiment from a few thousand personal interviews properly distributed than by questioning a million at random. In such a poll a few thousand of the rich and poor, the old and young, the urban and the rural, the Protestant and the Catholic and other social groups are interviewed in numbers proportionate to their respective

*The results of all the opinion polls used in this article can be found in the appendix of Jerome S. Bruner's *Mandate from the People*, recently published by Duell, Sloan and Pearce.

strength in American society. Indeed so few are visited by the representatives of the Institute of Public Opinion that George Gallup says the average person would have only one chance in ten of getting interviewed in a lifetime.

Let there be no illusions as to the validity of these devices, for it is unquestionably limited. Some aspects of public opinion cannot yet be measured, as for example the intensity of an individual's conviction. Lindsay Rogers wanted to know whether in giving his answer the person interviewed "roared like a lion or bleated like a lamb?" What sacrifice would he be willing to make in taxes, labor or blood to execute the opinion? Is it even strong enough to induce him to go to the polls and vote his conviction? Nevertheless these devices do show in what direction winds of public opinion are blowing, and in the absence of anything better let us check some of the platform planks against corresponding results of opinion polls.

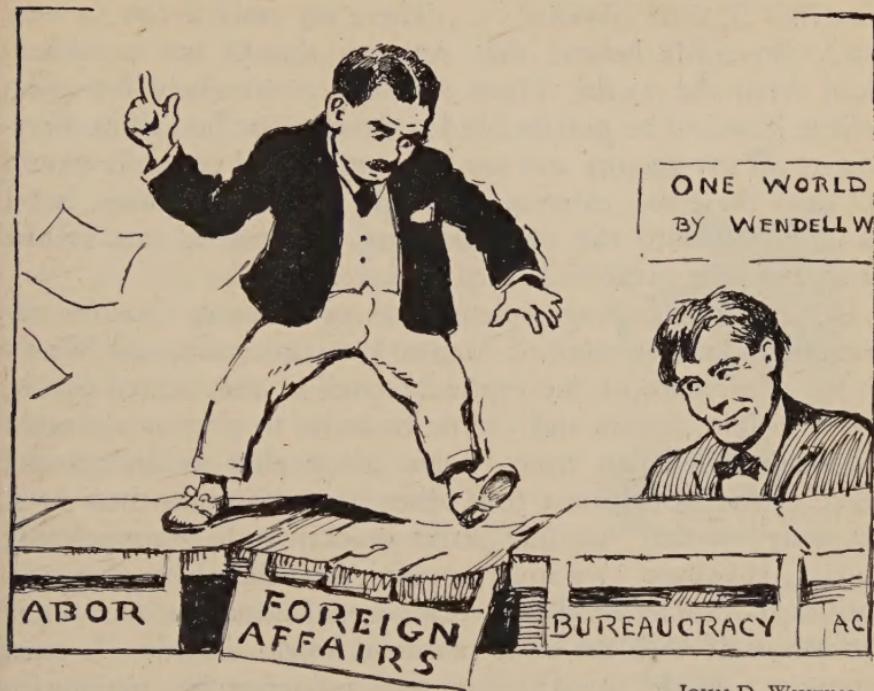
The 1944 Republican Convention

Turner Catledge attempted to give us in a few words a composite picture of the typical Republican delegate of 1944. "He would be," he explains, "a quite substantial half business, half professional man—a man who got into politics either from love of the game or to improve public service or to advance himself." It would not be far amiss to say that the Republican Convention was a convocation of the well-fed, the well-housed and the well-clothed. Opinion polls of presidential elections show clearly that the Republican party is decidedly weighted with these upper social and economic strata. Admittedly its Convention was lethargic, permeated at the beginning with an atmosphere of genuine defeatism. No single great, positive, driving and integrating purpose motivated the delegates. Even such a well-wisher as the Republican columnist, David Lawrence, admitted: "The Republican concept of the 1944 campaign has been to lay low and gather the protest vote." The false syntax is permissible license, under the circumstances, since "lie low" simply wouldn't do at all.

As compared with the Republicans of an earlier era this Convention represented age rather than youth, which again tallied with the picture of the party as revealed by every opinion poll of presidential elections classified by age groups. Time was when the Republican party proudly and correctly claimed itself to be the party of the young man. For half a century after the Civil War the brains of the nation rather gravitated to the Republican party. But the recognition of youth in such agencies of the New Deal as the N.Y.A. and the C.C.C. and the opportunity for public services with lucrative salaries in the vast administrative organization of the Roosevelt administration have had their effect. If there was a somewhat younger element in the 1944 Republican Convention it was the governors—seventeen if Dewey is included—and the median age of the group was fifty-one. They struggled none too successfully with the platform builders, the Elder Statesmen from Congress, men who had attained positions of power through long service in the safe Republican districts where sensitiveness to developing national currents was not as keenly felt as in the case of the governors. Walter Lippmann thought that the principal business of the Convention was to enable the Old Guard, which is pre-New Deal and pre-Pearl Harbor, to yield gracefully and with the necessary face saving "the management of the Republican party, and the leadership which they are admittedly incapable of exercising," and he thought the main business of the Convention was to liquidate the recent Republican past. It remains to be seen whether that was done.

Peace Planks

Nothing perplexed the Republican platform committee more than the phrasing of the peace plank. It finally pledged "the party to a post-war cooperative organization among sovereign nations to prevent military aggression" but "not by joining a world state. . . . This organization should develop effective cooperative means to direct peace forces to prevent or repel military aggression." One can read between these awkward



—JOHN D. WHITING

“Better keep off that plank, my little man. It’s much older than you are.”

lines the almost futile effort to satisfy well-nigh irreconcilable opinions. Willkie's prompt protest against enigmatic "peace forces" went unheeded as did also his later criticism of the persistent use of "sovereignty." The sixteen Republican governors even appeared before the committee to insist upon removal of the ambiguity but gave up carrying their fight to the floor when informed that Dewey, the certain nominee, had approved the plank verbatim. Thus did the committee forestall the regaling of the radio audience with a fight to the finish between "isolationists" and "internationalists."

While Dewey did not clarify the peace plank in his acceptance speech he did essay the statesman's role in seeking common ground, the "growing area of agreement." "Recently," said he, "the overwhelming majesty of that broad area of agree-

ment has become obvious. . . . There are only a few, a very few, who really believe that America should try to remain aloof from the world. There are only a relatively few who believe it would be practicable for America or her allies to renounce all sovereignty and join a Super-state. I certainly would not deny these two extremes the right to their opinions; but I stand firmly with the overwhelming majority of my fellow citizens in that great wide area of agreement."

Dewey's "area of agreement" was given more concrete expression in his statement of August 17th concerning the Washington conference of the representatives of the United States, Great Britain, Russia and China. In order to prevent defeated Germany and Japan from "again being able to disrupt the peace of the world these four allies must maintain their present unity" so that "we may strike quickly with overwhelming might." However, "we must not sink into the abyss of power politics. . . . The kind of world organization we seek must concern itself with the basic causes of world disorder. It must promote a world opinion that will influence the nations to right conduct."

Contrasting sharply with the equivocation of the Republican plank on permanent peace is the Democratic pledge "to make all necessary and effective agreements and arrangements through which the nations would maintain adequate forces to meet the needs of preventing war and of making impossible the preparation for war and which would have such forces available for joint action when necessary." Nor did President Roosevelt let the matter rest there but in his acceptance speech said: "The American people now know that all nations of the world—large and small—will have to play their appropriate part in keeping the peace by force. . . ."

How do the declarations of the two platforms on permanent peace square with national opinion? At the close of 1943 opinion polls indicated that four out of every five Americans favored our taking an active part in post-war world affairs and even in the East Central States, the heart of so-called isolation-

ism, this was the conviction of seven out of ten persons. Ninety-three per cent of these still clung to their convictions in the face of the suggestion that such participation might cost the expense of maintaining an international police force and sixty-one per cent stood firm even if it involved us in "entangling alliances." Seven out of ten Americans have concluded that there can be no international order without an international body to deal with controversies between nations and only one out of seven is opposed to America joining a world

union for that purpose. Eight out of ten want a post-war international police force and almost three out of every four would grant the union some power over the size of our own army, navy and air force.

Concern for Post-War Jobs

More fundamental than permanent peace is the voter's concern over post-war jobs. The worker will not use his ballot consciously to imperil future employment. The Republican platform ignores the possibility of a gigantic post-war depression. There is no suggestion of a plan to meet the emergency implicit in the altogether possible failure of private enterprise to attain full peace-time employment. The Convention seemed allergic to the very word "plan." No attention to the existing public opinion on this issue was apparent. The pump-priming of the thirties had never quite set the economic system humming but business men were then beginning to wonder whether,



"I'm for international peace, collaboration, etc.—but, mind you, I won't concede anything to any foreigners."

after all, continued government spending might not be inevitable. Then came Pearl Harbor and government spending did at last prime the pump. Now the achievement of full employment induced by this government spending is assumed to be a triumph of "free enterprise" judging by the supreme satisfaction reflected in the de luxe magazine advertisements. Dewey was the only Republican Convention speaker to mention "full employment." "We Republicans," said he, "are agreed that full employment shall be a first objective of national policy."

The Democratic party disposes of the job issue with the platform claim that "it used the powers of the government to provide employment in industry." The Republican platform promises "the fullest stable employment through private enterprise" and in order that there may be no misunderstanding adds "we reject the theory of restoring prosperity through government spending and deficit financing." The implications at this point were perilous enough to induce Dewey, the morning after his nomination, to modify if he did not repudiate the platform position by stating that he thought federal aid would have to be given to bolster re-employment in the post-war period of transition back to civilian production. The question of jobs calls for something far more substantial than Governor Dewey's stirring sentences of the acceptance speech: "I say to you, our country is just fighting its way through to new horizons. The future of America has no limit." This is superb rhetoric. Whether it represents the clairvoyance of a seer or a gigantic miscalculation of a candidate only time will tell.

Governor Dewey was but the mouthpiece of America in proclaiming his faith in the future. Such is the hypnotic effect of war prosperity that only one worker out of ten expects to have to look for a new job when war ends. Last winter sixty-two per cent of the American soldiers in Britain believed their old jobs were waiting for them. Unlimited demand for cars, refrigerators, washing machines and television, it is assumed, would insure permanent prosperity. Yet at the very moment when Congress was killing the National Resources Planning

Board and its proposal to supplement private industry with enough public works to insure full employment, eighty-six per cent of the American people thought that government, labor and business ought to get together and lay plans to prevent post-war unemployment. This was the conviction of eighty-eight per cent of the Republicans and eighty-seven per cent of the Democrats. Two out of every three remembered the lean thirties and thought government projects would be needed after the war. Seventy-three per cent thought the government ought to guarantee a real job at useful work to the unemployed man until he found a job in industry, and this was the view of six out of every ten Republicans. Candidates might as well take note. The public wants prosperity insurance and this means plans. Nor will the plans of business alone satisfy.

On Getting Back to Normal

Did prevailing public opinion justify the Republican platform promise to "terminate rationing, price fixing, and all other emergency powers" and the Democratic platform's promise of the "earliest possible release of war time controls"? Nine out of every ten Americans believe that rationing will be desirable for a while after the war if necessary to feed peoples hard hit by the war—to be precise ninety-three per cent of the Democrats and ninety-one per cent of the Republicans. Of the Republicans seventy-two per cent and of the Democrats seventy-seven per cent thought ceiling prices ought to be kept for a while after the war. Nor need the platform committee have been so precipitate in promising drastic tax reduction when ninety-five per cent are expecting high taxes for the next ten years. May not platform makers have underestimated the public intelligence and its fear of inflation?

The Bid for the Negro Vote

Politicians are well aware that the strategy of presidential campaigns requires more than the scanning of opinion polls and noting majority trends on them. Calculating the attitudes

of politically conscious minority groups holding balances of power in doubtful states with big electoral votes is much more important. The march of events has now placed the Negroes in precisely that position and their leaders are not only aware of it but are making the most of it. They may hold the power to swing the electoral votes of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana.

For two generations after the Civil War Republicans held captive the Negro vote by the magic of Lincoln's name. Then came the great depression and in 1932 Robert L. Vann, editor of the largest Negro paper in Pennsylvania, declared: "My friends, go turn Lincoln's picture to the wall. That debt has been paid in full." Too long had Republicans taken that vote for granted. Overwhelmingly in the lower income groups, Negroes, particularly in cities, were the recipients of New Deal relief. The Roosevelt administration cultivated that vote by appointing one Negro after another to \$5,000 positions, all publicized with gigantic headlines in Harlem dailies.

The revolt of the Southern Democrats against President Roosevelt under the banner of "white supremacy" has provided the Republicans their big opportunity to bid for the Negro vote. To the astonishment of Southern Democrats with whom Republican Congressmen had been fraternizing, the Republican platform pledged submission of an amendment to the Constitution abolishing the poll tax, the enactment of legislation against lynching, an "immediate Congressional inquiry to ascertain the extent to which mistreatment, segregation and discrimination against Negroes who are in the armed forces are impairing morale and efficiency and the adoption of corrective legislation" and "the establishment by federal legislation of a permanent fair-employment-practice commission."

The bid of the Republican platform for the Negro vote appears to be taking effect. On July eighth, Edgar G. Brown, director of the National Negro Council, announced that a poll of 120,000 Negro votes taken immediately after the Republican Convention in twenty-three Northern states showed seventy-

two per cent for Dewey and twenty-eight per cent for Roosevelt, a seven per cent increase for Dewey over a poll taken several months earlier. That Dewey has not been neglecting the Negro vote is shown by his appointment of a Negro attorney to a \$17,500 state judgeship. This leaves President Roosevelt behind since no such lucrative office has ever been bestowed on any other Negro.

The problem of the Negro vote confronted the Democratic Convention with a dilemma. After nominating presidential electors specifically not pledged in advance to vote for the nominee of the national convention, the Texas Democratic State Convention sent to Chicago a delegation determined to rule or ruin on the race issue. They may have accomplished both. Intimidated by the threat of Texas and other Southern delegations the platform committee adopted an appeasement policy and the progressive New Deal racial ideas went out the window, fair employment and all. There remained only the denatured platform statement: "We believe that racial and religious minorities have the right to live, develop and vote equally with all citizens and share the rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution. Congress should exert its full constitutional powers to protect those rights." The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People thought this "best characterized as a splinter" rather than a plank, and added: "Badgered by professional bigots from the South and directed by northern political machines more interested in votes than principle, the Democratic mountain labored



"The Democratic mountain labored and brought forth a mouse."

ored and brought forth a mouse of evasion." Here is a resentment portentous in half-a-dozen pivotal states to the party that almost monopolized the Northern Negro vote in the thirties.

Overtures to Labor

Labor too is in the strategic position of holding a balance of power in half-a-dozen pivotal states. The platform of the Republican party "accepts the purposes of the National Labor Relations Act, the Wages and Hours Act, the Social Security Act and other federal statutes designed to promote and protect the welfare of American working men and women . . ." and "the Secretary of Labor would be a representative of labor." All the great labor organizations got concessions but their demand for the repeal of the Smith-Connally Anti-Strike Act was resolutely refused. The Democratic platform countered Republican promises with a recital of performances. Thus the Democratic party was declared to have "used the powers of government to provide employment in industry" which we have seen the Republican party implied it would not do. "It wrote a new Magna Charta for labor. It provided social security. . . . It found the road to prosperity through production and employment."

The C.I.O. Political Action Committee

A new factor in the 1944 campaign is the extraordinarily dynamic C.I.O. Political Action Committee. A pro-Roosevelt organization, its immediate purpose is to get workers registered and informed on campaign issues. Along with other liberal elements its delegates at the Democratic Convention attempted to blitz the Convention into renominating Wallace for Vice President. They were frustrated in this purpose by the unprecedented intervention of National Chairman Hannegan who, through the great city bosses, manipulated the nomination of Senator Truman instead. Since four out of five workers have been voting for Roosevelt, labor is even more potent than

the Negro as a balance of power. If the Political Action Committee can get out the labor vote it may decide the election.

It is easily possible to overemphasize platforms. After all, voters largely ignore them and simply vote for candidates. A ballot is generally an act of faith in a man. Consequently the pronouncements of presidential candidates overshadow platforms. These will pour forth to the very eve of the election. In contrast with the long familiar face of President Roosevelt, that of Dewey now stimulates expectancy. He is the incarnation of the Republican party. Only he can clarify the admitted platform ambiguities. His utterances can make or break both him and his party.

Is Dewey of Presidential Caliber?

This much is clear: Dewey will not, like Willkie, ignore the party organization and try to sweep the Republican rank and file into a personal following. A few hours after his nomination he was already busy drawing the entire Republican organization into the inner councils of the campaign. Conferences were being held with national committee members, state chairmen and other party leaders. Later he conferred with Republican congressmen and governors. He purposes to build the Republican party again into the efficiently functioning organization of its happier days. If the two-party system is desirable this augurs well for the nation. Meanwhile he searches diligently for those "great wide areas of agreement" the discovery of which is the candidate's *raison d'etre*. He insists upon re-establishing harmony between Congress and the Executive and condemns the habit of disparaging the people's representatives.

Is Dewey of presidential caliber? More important is the question, "Is he growing?" There is every indication that he is not the amateur of half-a-dozen years ago but is maturing and that rapidly. Even Lincoln attained presidential stature slowly. His disappointing impromptu speeches on the journey to Washington before inauguration prompted the famous

liberal editor Samuel Bowles to pronounce him a "Simple Susan." Who does not recall the scorn that liberals poured on the Governor of New York a dozen years ago? Franklin D. Roosevelt had no views and did not dare touch the red-hot issue of removing from office the impossible Mayor Jimmy Walker of New York City. Walter Lippmann expressed the consensus of liberal judgment then in dismissing Governor Roosevelt as "a pleasant man, who without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be President." Yet this was the same Roosevelt who nine months later met the greatest peace-time emergency in our history with the leadership of the memorable "hundred days" following the inauguration and so captivated the nation with his mastery of the crisis that a famous New York business man who had voted for Hoover hoped God would forgive him for it and pronounced Franklin D. Roosevelt "the greatest leader since Jesus Christ."

Dewey's Secrets

Close observers testify that Dewey is systematic, thorough and efficient. The secret of his spectacular career as a prosecutor is his habit of eliminating the extraneous and reducing a problem to its bare essentials. Thus he constructs a water-tight case. His acceptance speech suggests that penchant. Unerringly he found the weak spots in the Roosevelt armor and rebuttal of his speech is not easy. Dorothy Thompson listened and barely missed ecstasy. "It was a masterpiece" she wrote. "The shortest speech made by any speaker, a statement totally devoid of slogans, wise cracks, or pathetic oratory, it opened a totally new type of campaigning." Incidentally the manner in which the address came out over the broadcasting system revealed that at last President Roosevelt is confronted with a competitor through that medium.

Governor Dewey has gathered about him at Albany an able team of capable young aides. It was almost as much reminiscent of things already done as a pledge of future performance when, in his acceptance speech, he promised "a cabinet of the ablest

men and women to be found in America. The members of that Cabinet will expect and will receive full delegation of the powers of their office. . . . They will each be experienced in the task to be done and young enough to do it." Walter Lippmann has concluded that Dewey is "without doubt one of the most sure footed administrators to come forward in our time."

Is the Administration a Gerontocracy?

Governor Dewey touched a tender spot when he said the administration "has grown old in office. It has become tired and quarrelsome." The internal conflict among high administrative officers has indeed been notorious if not unprecedented in American history. Public opinion polls indicate disgust with these squabbles and governmental inefficiency. Nor can the charge of having "grown old in office" be disputed. A brilliant Washington correspondent last March denominated it Washington Gerontocracy, that is to say, government by old men, and supplied the supporting data. In the cabinet the Secretary of War is seventy-seven; the Secretary of State, seventy-three; the then Secretary of the Navy, seventy; the Secretary of Commerce, seventy; and the Secretary of the Interior, seventy. In the Senate the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee is eighty-six; of the Agriculture Committee, eighty; of Commerce, seventy-one; of Reclamation, seventy-one; of Naval Affairs, seventy; of Post Office, seventy-five; of Privileges and Elections, seventy-seven. In the House the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee is seventy-four; of Rules, seventy-eight; of Ways and Means, seventy-eight. These are not insignificant positions but top posts in the national government.

Is Roosevelt Tired?

President Roosevelt is entitled to be tired. He would scarcely deny it and in any case his voice betrayed it when he delivered his acceptance speech. It was not the old voice of the fireside chat. It would be interesting to listen to a recording of the President's delivery of his acceptance speech followed by that of Governor Dewey's. Moreover, there may be internal evi-

dence of the President's weariness unconsciously revealed in the very phrasing of his acceptance speech. Did he let that slip out in the passage: "After many years of public service, my personal thoughts have turned to the day when I could return to civil life. All that is within me cries out to go back to my home on the Hudson River, to avoid all the publicity which in our democracy follows every step of the nation's Chief Executive." Partisan Republicans will scoff at the idea but here is the nostalgic cry of the weary. "In other words," writes the editor of the *Christian Century*, "we believe that Mr. Roosevelt's letter of acceptance shows that the facts with regard to his bodily and mental state are exactly as Mr. Dewey declared in his speech to the recent Republican Convention." It was a very tired man indeed who was induced to write the letters that drove Democratic leaders to fury, threw the Chicago Convention into confusion and left every important candidate for vice-president except the winner with a bitter conviction of having been betrayed by his chief.

That Dewey's allusion to the age of Democratic leaders drew fire is evident from the attention given it in the Democratic Convention. Nearly every speaker there attempted to counter the Republican attack on age and the appeal to youth. The rebuttal is taking the form of raising the issue of the relative merits of age and experience as against youth and immaturity. This is seen in the President's acceptance speech when he said: "The people of the United States will decide this fall whether they wish to turn over this 1944 job, this world-wide job, to inexperienced and immature hands." Already Democrats are raising the question as to just how the internationally inexperienced Dewey who has disparaged old men would fare sitting down at a council table with those old masters, Churchill and Stalin, each older than President Roosevelt. Verily, the issue of age is a two-edged sword cutting both ways.

Wallace vs. Truman

The extraordinary efforts to prevent the delegates in the

Democratic Convention from renominating Vice President Wallace is understandable only on the assumption that it was the implicit belief of all that it meant a nomination of the next President of the United States. Thus were Dewey's references to age and weariness tacitly recognized. Franklin D. Roosevelt was nominated for a fourth presidential term because only he might hold together most of the irreconcilable elements of the party until November. Wallace had been far ahead of his competitors for the vice-presidential nomination in all the public opinion polls. Every element in the convention reminiscent of the Jacksonian Democratic tradition—the interest of the common man—shouted for Wallace. So irrepressible were they that the will of the delegates had to be overwhelmed by intrigue, manipulation and main force on the part of interests that could not tolerate the idea of Wallace as President of the United States. The result was the nomination of Truman, a man of courage, character and fine achievement in the Senate. "He will make a passable Vice President," comments T. R. B. of the *New Republic*. "But Truman as President of the United States in times like these? He told a Senate colleague a few days before he was nominated that the thought terrified him. It terrifies me too." History seems to indicate that the Senate provides no adequate apprenticeship for the office of Chief Executive. Since the Civil War the American people have elected only two Senators to the presidency—Benjamin Harrison and Warren G. Harding. In each case they failed signally to get a competent Chief Executive.

The Republicans Have Learned Much

In so far as the New Deal signifies a program of policies enacted into statutes the Republicans are handicapped in attacking it. In the Northwestern University round-table broadcast July 2, 1944, Dr. John A. Lapp, Chairman of the Platform Committee of the League of Independent Voters, said: "I counted thirty planks in this (Republican) platform that were taken directly from the achievements of the Roosevelt Admin-

istration." Neither Republican Governor Dwight H. Green of Illinois nor Werner W. Schroeder, Republican National Committeeman from Illinois, who were on the panel, challenged the statement. Indeed Dr. Lapp's standing as a scholar insures that it was not an irresponsible remark. Too much of the substance of the New Deal has become accepted Republican policies to permit attack on that line.

Strange to say the shrewdest suggestion to Republicans came from President Roosevelt himself immediately after his overwhelming re-election in 1936. He is alleged to have said he could have used better strategy than the Republicans and attacked the New Deal at its weakest point, its administration. More than two years earlier Charles A. Beard, the dean of American political scientists, viewing the jumbled scene from the capital city had recorded his observations in a notable article in *Current History* under the descriptive title, "Confusion Rules in Washington." "It is not beside the mark," he concluded, "to say that in October and November, 1934, the Government of the United States had no administrative head." The distinguished scholar was scarcely more temperate than Governor Dewey in his rhetorical question at the Convention: "Does anyone suggest that the present national administration is giving either efficient or competent government? We have not heard that claim made even by its most fanatical supporters."

The Prestige of the Commander in Chief

Yet Republicans had better not assume that it is all over but the shouting. Quentin Reynolds merely gave picturesque expression to the Democratic campaign strategy with his "never remove a pitcher when he is pitching a winning game." No one can say how generally that idea has become rooted in the voter's mind. Nor did Dewey dispel the prestige of the Commander in Chief in the 1944 campaign with his implication that to military men alone must be left the management of the armed forces. Madison, Polk, Lincoln, McKinley, Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt—not a single one of them could wash his hands of

responsibility for the conduct of commanders in the field and every war president has played a part in determining over-all strategy as well as in selecting, promoting and dismissing leaders of the armed forces. Let Governor Dewey read once more the Constitution of the United States and note how permeated it is with the inflexible resolution of all English-speaking peoples that the army and navy must be kept—even in time of war—subordinate to civil authority.

"Forgotten men" in these days of fat pay envelopes are scarcer than they once were but millions still remember the lean thirties and how "he helped me out when I needed a job." Let no one then assume that Franklin Roosevelt is already counted out. He knows that he is at last confronted by a strong Republican candidate in a year not so auspicious for the Democratic party. Difficulties challenge and fascinate him and stimulate latent powers within him. As the campaign develops there may yet again be brilliant flashes of his old political prescience, unpredictable sallies. Who can say there may not yet be innings when once more he will knock a homer over the left field with all the bases loaded. Governor Dewey and the Republican managers would do well to take nothing whatever for granted.

Marks of a Christian in Politics

By DONALD FRAZIER

In battle most bullets are wasted. In an election every ballot strikes two significant marks: (1) the life of the community and (2) the character of the voter himself. Both are affected whether a potential voter votes, refuses to vote or is deprived of a vote.

Politicians seek the meaning of votes for a defeated major

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party as carefully as they consider those which add up to victory. The non-voter's decision is disturbing along with the decision of the radical who votes a minor ticket. Potential voters deprived of the ballot are more than a reflection of a people's standards and prejudices—they are a constant source of uncertainty and possible political disorder. A man's ballot, whether issued, withheld from within or denied from without, affects the community.

The Character of the Voter

A ballot affects the voter himself because it calls forth his decision and effort. Men are noble or degraded in accordance with what comes forth from within them.

A modern democratic theory declares that one vote shall count for one and no more. This theory expresses an ideal not a fact. For in truth ballots are "weighted." The deepest meaning of a ballot is found in the faith and character expressed through it. Understanding this, professional politicians are not content with knowing merely the totals at the end of an election. Their continued success depends upon probing beneath the surface to find out what voters have in mind and how strong their convictions are. Further, they know that the faith and character which lie behind ballots are revealed as much by day to day political living as by the pulling of a lever. Law and the lever say one voice counts for one and no more. Political living between election days generally operates on the theory that one counts for as much as he can.

The questions set for this article are: **What does a Christian have in mind when he votes? What character propels him? What faith draws him? How does he differ from his unchristian neighbor?**

When a citizen, Christian or otherwise, prepares to vote in the United States he is influenced by three considerations:

(1) Political organizations; (2) Issues; and (3) Personalities.

Party Organization

A leading Congregational clergyman of the last generation used to tell his friends that it was better to vote the Republican ticket, even when the Democrats had a better man, because of the high quality of Republican organization. Without defending his choice of parties it can be asserted with truth that he fixed upon an important fact in American politics. The experts estimate that of the three elements making up a campaign (organization, issues, and personalities) party organization most determines the result.

American voters are frequently influenced by their regard for party workers. Democratic ward workers paid attention to the large number of the poor in the cities of the '80's, '90's and early 1900's. Gratitude was expressed on election day. True, it often was a form of corruption, but it was highly effective. Another political device is the face-to-face solicitation of votes. This is not dishonorable; it is imperative. Socialist Mayor McLevy rang doorbells on every street in Bridgeport for a good many years before his administration could begin. It should not be forgotten that solicitation is a two-way process: by it the professional politician secures refusals as well as promises; he learns wherein his party's ways must be mended. Mr. Hoover was defeated before he started to campaign in 1932 because the party organization had no enthusiasm in the grass roots. Party workers had no heart for ringing doorbells. They were receiving too many rebuffs.

Political Traditions

Traditions, victories won, mighty deeds performed enliven organizations by sending their waves of intellectual and emotional appeal down the generations. Many a Democrat is so because his grandfather endured the stigma of Copperhead instead of giving up his belief that other means than war were available for solving the nation's sectional difficulties. Many a young man is a Republican because he is proud to be on the side of Lincoln, the union and rugged Teddy Roosevelt.

Dishonesty, greed and hate never constitute an acknowledged tradition. The sordid aspects of party life cannot be generalized into principles. Decency, high principles and true statesmanship have the advantage of being cumulative. No one votes Republican because he thinks Grant's an ideal administration. On the other hand the unrealized ideals of Lincoln and the anti-slavers moved men on from the battlefield and constitutional law to the promotion of schools for colored people and to hammering at the gross inhumanity of the industrial system with its long hours, low pay and city slums.

No major party has been able to embody consistently a true liberalism for every hour. Liberals successful in elections and legislation have something to conserve. Both parties, therefore, contain explosive liberal and conservative traditions along with present day liberal and conservative men. (It is one of the virtues of the independent voter that he recognizes this.) In this there is political health, not sickness. The state is fortunate when the putting together of differing views of community goals goes on in the local, state and national party caucuses instead of through an inter-party fight which might destroy as much as could possibly be gained. It is fruitful for friends to hold opposing views. Take away friendship and opposite opinions yield heat not light. Parties in this country are a concrete expression of political friendship; they held the north and south together for years after the churches had broken their fellowships.

Issues in a Campaign

An American election is far from being a perfect device for uncovering the mind of the people on public issues. Unlike the more clear cut radical, liberal, conservative or reactionary parties of English and European politics, both major American parties reflect a wide range of public thinking. This raises the question of an election mandate. What does the electorate mean with respect to issues? Campaigns often befuddle issues. Platforms are notoriously written to catch votes, or at least to

minimize dissension among the intra-party sectional or opinionated groups. They reveal party forbearance more than party philosophy. During campaigns political ideas and interests, organizations and personalities are entwined more than they are isolated and clearly defined. The one question definitely answered by an election is who will occupy the main seats of responsibility in the four years to come. All the rest is rather fluid. By his party and campaign commitments a president seems bound to appoint certain men and pursue certain policies. But is he? Who can foresee the circumstances he will face? Is he bound to do more than to think and work hard for the good of the country as God, his conscience and the political pressures on him lead him to see the good?

Join Up or Have No Influence

This failure of campaigns and elections to define issues clearly is not the total loss that many intellectuals try to make their neighbors believe it is. American parties simply are not doctrinaire. They are alliances between local and sectional organizations and certain pressure groups. The national upshot is two party organizations each as delicate as the United Nations. They are built to bring home an electoral victory and only tentatively and uncertainly to guarantee some particular philosophy of legislation and administration. Intellectuals who see politics racing about outside their categories do not like it. Neither do the pressure groups which want to see their special interests in the driver's seat. That brings up the main point. Doctrinaire and favor-seeking groups alike are forced by the American party system to join if they are to be effective at all. The price of joining is to submit their programs or demands to the party mould at least for the duration of the campaign. An opinionated man learns at this point that there are other opinions beside his own which are strongly held. The eyes of pressure groups are opened to the fact that there are other problems beside their own. Parties thus bring about public thinking of a sort.

American voters have other means than provided on election day for expressing their opinions on public issues. In the light of the election returns all doctrinaire and favor seeking groups, regardless of party connections, rethink their strategies. Perhaps election results have given them reason to reconsider their basic aims. These new and old strategies and aims are expressed and dealt with in legislative and administrative public hearings and debate, through petitions and lobbies, the press and radio and a host of personal conversations. Out of the daily alternation between public endeavor and private purpose come the confirmation or changes of opinion and the acts which are political life.

Political Personalities

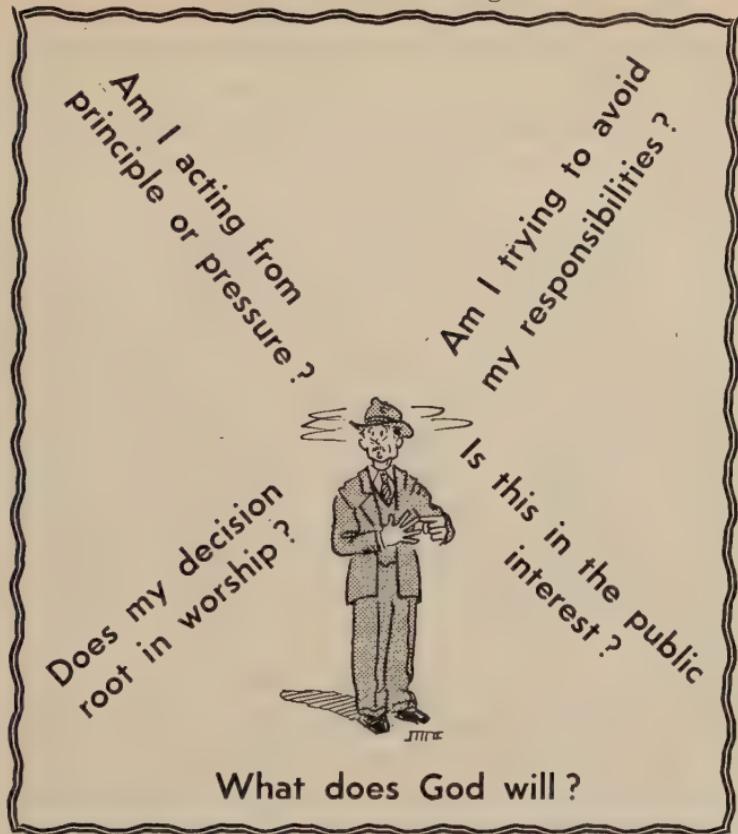
If elections were only a question of liking or disliking candidates the voter's problem would still be difficult. A modern campaign offers each citizen an opportunity to know the main candidates to about the degree that he might know a loquacious guest at a moderate-sized social gathering. On this first meeting he can say whether he likes the man. This impression together with what the journalists and gossips say the candidate did at other meetings is all a lone voter has to go on. Therefore the common people by relying on party organizations are wise by being humble. They are not always right in their choice, but they are right in not letting the candidate alone be the basis of their choice.

The independent voters are, of course, a force to reckon with. The threat which they carry with them to the polls is absolutely necessary to the health of the nation. Yet in the main their superior integrity and sagacity is doubtful. Thinking men may be regulars in the parties as well as mugwumps. Straight ticket voters can be as socially minded, as liberal and as loving of the Lord as those who flick the lesser levers.

What Marks a Christian in Politics?

In all so far discussed a Christian citizen shares alike with those who make no Christian pretenses. What then is the dif-

Portrait of a Christian Thinking About Politics



ference between the Christian and his neighbor? It can be argued that it is only a Christian who can be a good citizen and that any good citizen to the extent of his goodness is Christian. But there are some differences between citizens which this sweeping statement tends to blur.

He Acts From Principle, Not Pressure

First, a Christian does from principle what a technically good, law-abiding citizen may have done from compulsion of circumstances. That citizen is good who, informed by party associates or by law that his demands are gross, cooperates by becoming reasonable. A Christian is careful about the expression of his self-interest and seeks to be just in the first place. If he makes a mistake in his judgment he possesses a basic desire

for justice which leads him to repent and pursue without reluctance a more just policy. Truly Christian motivation is different in quality from the motivation of a man who does not look beyond self-interest except under pressure.

His Activity Roots in Worship

Second, the root of a Christian's political activity is in worship. A secular citizen is likely to have sponged up his ideals from the community reservoir. When circumstances squeeze out his acts of citizenship, he is dry. Repeated often enough the reservoir itself goes dry. The Christian, on the other hand, has scouted the wooded hill lands and has visited the springs whose waters "make glad the city of God." When he uses the community's ideas and resources he remembers their origins and is eager to keep open the channel of communication between God, the source of all ideals, and the community—a channel which is his own conscience and life.

He Expresses God's Say, Not His Own

Third, a Christian votes not in order to have his say but in order to express, however inadequately, God's say. Men make their own political lives along with their houses and pictures, poetry and machines. They make them by many patterns—a laissez-faire state; a totalitarian state; a social service state; an administrative state. But a Christian works at citizenship, as he works at all else, to please God and serve men, not to please men and serve himself. When he learns of his mistakes he remembers the gospel of forgiveness and the duty of repentance.

His Vote Is a Matter of Conscience

Fourth, a Christian does not try to delegate to someone else the burden of political decision. Because of a profound and quite modern change in the structure of political living the burden now rests on every citizen. When the community was monarchical or more strictly aristocratic than now, little men fought for a voice in affairs which seemed always to run against

their interests. To get a hearing for their interests was their just aim. Today, however, the problem is reversed. Every special interest gets a hearing, but no one in particular holds the public interest as his special vocation. What used to be regarded as the peculiar function of the king or aristocracy now devolves upon the whole citizenry. To meet that change the Christian must re-interpret the act of voting.

A Christian citizen does some public as opposed to self-interest thinking. He knows that there is no public conscience except that possessed by individual persons. It is true that a man's conscience is not public property, but it is equally true that no community can endure when the fruits of private conscience—decisions, appraisals of facts, a sense of justice, etc.—are withheld from the public. Conversely, any community that seriously impairs the exercise of conscience, which is the source of justice and of reform, is to be pitied, for its doom is established. In the final analysis conscience is the community's only defender. All else—laws, services, armies—is plate glass; these things reveal the outer form of social obligations and opportunities and afford a certain defense against predatory agents, but without the active conscience of every citizen they are easily broken.

A squeamishness about public utterance on the part of some citizens reveals all too plainly the spirit of Pilate. The life and death of a democratic community is in its citizens' hands as completely as the life and death of Jesus were in the hands of the Roman judge. A Christian will never try to escape hard decision by washing his hands of the social problems of his day.

Voting, properly interpreted, is a matter of conscience. That at once explains why it is a duty and why no compulsory voting law can ever work satisfactorily. It also tells Christians something about the sort of state they are trying to build. For conscience is always free. It cannot be compelled.

He Seeks a Society Expressing Free Fellowship

Fifth, a Christian citizen seeks to build a society which is an appropriate expression of the Christian spirit. His aim

conflicts with the purpose of men who would erect or bolster a social structure of racial dominance, economic exploitation and inequality before the law. It also conflicts with what frequently passes for liberalism. The primary aim of many liberals has been to create a society in which it pays to do right, in which the honest and kind are at no disadvantage and sacrifice is unnecessary. Here the dominant virtue is prudence. The result is a community where folk fear to do wrong because of the penalties—reduced rights and physical loss—that speedily visit them. The Christian may cooperate with such a program, but he will do it with reservations.

The Christian's goals are freedom and fellowship, not fear-motivated obedience. He is not primarily interested in making sacrifice unnecessary, but in establishing such a spirit of brotherhood in each man's heart that he will gladly be kind and honest and gladly sacrifice himself if need be because God loves him and expects much of him. The dominant consideration is loyalty or love. He guides his conduct by the faith that his efforts and sacrifice may help to produce the Beloved Community, a free fellowship.

When moderns talk of freedom they usually pun, using the word in one sense and implying another. Christians recognize two sorts of freedom: that which law and social recognition give through their systems of rights and social policies, and that which God gives through truth and integrity of character. It is clear that in the long last the former is dependent upon the latter. Therefore, the Christian always works for a system of rights and social policies which will encourage or make room for the freedom which legislation can never create.

On the surface it looks as if laissez-faire law and policy give widest scope for freedom of soul. Leave men alone so they are free to be good and kind. This is much too optimistic. Pilate, avoiding the determination of community policy, talked laissez-faire. History none the less holds him responsible for the events that ensued. Furthermore, it is quite evident that nobody ever did really want a laissez-faire social policy. Cobden and Bright

fighting to repeal the Corn Laws did not appeal to "no interference," but to a more justifiable community policy. Why should three million mothers starve for the benefit of England's corn growers? When men dream of spanning a continent with canals, railroads, highways or airways, they enlist the support of the whole community if they can. They do not want to be left alone; they want help. Historically it was reasonable and just that help be given. No society, Christian or otherwise, can be built on the theory of leaving men and things alone to work out their own tendencies.

He Has Confidence in Social Possibilities

Lastly, unlike certain mystics who sigh "the world is too much with us" and wait for a specialized rebirth, the main stream of Christian thought from the beginning has tended to assert that the spiritual and physical energies necessary for community building are renewed by Grace from hour to hour. Sentimental longings for another sort of world are a non-violent form of "kicking against the pricks," a sin which is on a par with worldliness itself. Indeed it is not another world that is needed but a right reading of the world that is here and a right use of its substance. The social problem is not a Promethean one of bringing down new powers from on high. Much progress can be made by releasing men from man-made hindrances to the expression of the powers they have. The problem is to discover for life's traffic those highways which produce the fewest accidents, yield the highest rewards for travel, and get travellers most efficiently to their proper destinations. Christians face social questions with the assurance that men are free moral beings, partners with God, His sons, inheritors of effective tools and a promise. Therefore they plant and build and vote and legislate with vigor, testing the methods rationally by their effects on the character and happiness of all men.

Protestant Political Action

By TOM KEEHN and
K. W. UNDERWOOD

1944 may be known as the year when "political action" became a catchword in American Protestantism. From Protestant presses have come political action primers and handbooks emphasizing down-to-earth, bell-ringing strategy and pamphlets on national issues and "neglected political opportunities." The Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches has formed a Legislative Committee of experts to keep the denomination informed on important issues in national legislation and to support those groups which are working toward the kind of a world sought in church pronouncements. It has hired a full-time legislative secretary and opened an office in Washington.* The Friends have formed a Committee on National Legislation with a full-time secretary and issue a compact news letter.

"To Help Win the Peace"

Northern Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Disciples, and several other denominations have sponsored World Order campaigns to rid the churches of isolationist sentiment, to register sentiment for international collaboration in the right places and the right time. These campaigns have in some instances been implemented not merely by study sessions and inspirational mass meetings, but by thousands of personal letters and petitions to Congressmen and political parties and by house to house visitations. The record of the Protestant churches in formulating public opinion has been much more creditable in this war than in World War I. As the *World Alliance News Letter* says, the churches have "shown a keen sense of religious responsibility to help win the peace."

*Address, Washington Federation of Churches, 1751 N Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

To help keep Protestant political action from becoming an ephemeral crusade which might end only in despair and a gust of pamphleteering, *Social Action Magazine* is attempting in this article to do a bit of bookkeeping on the effectiveness and extent of Church political action programs to date.

Political Action at Local and State Levels

Political action by local church groups in America is spotty and for the most part ineffectively done. However, wartime problems have brought home to councils of churches in boom-towns, such as Wichita, Washington, Los Angeles and Dayton, the necessity of exercising the churches' influence in municipal elections for adequate wartime housing and for improved health and recreational facilities. Of the councils of churches with paid directors of social service and "community strategy" (Washington, Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Dayton) practically all exert political pressure in local affairs, cooperate with other pressure groups, send out legislative digests to pastors, testify and lobby at city council hearings and sessions, follow records of councilmen and representatives and keep in personal touch with them. The Cincinnati Social Service Commission of the Protestant Churches and the Indianapolis Council of Churches send delegates to their state legislatures each year to lobby for the realization of the principles which their church leaders have long advocated.

New York State Legislative Committee

The area of political interest of church groups is often seriously circumscribed. The New York State Council of Churches' Legislative Committee has spent much of its energy in fighting gambling and liquor interests, little in rallying support for legislation affecting such concerns as housing, health and social security. During the first two months of 1944, for example, the New York Legislative Committee took action on ten bills dealing with lotteries, bingo, pari-mutuel betting; nine with

liquor; six with racial or religious discrimination; six with child labor or welfare; one with Easter; one with unordained clergy performing marriages.

This Legislative Committee attempts to influence state law makers by education and moral suasion through mimeographed memoranda from the committee giving its stand and personal visitations. A report of Legislative Committee action on each bill approved or disapproved is sent monthly to every Protestant pastor in New York State. On some bills, letters and telegrams are sent to chairmen of ministerial associations asking them to urge local pastors and congregations to make known their views to legislators. The Committee abstains from partisan politics. It endorses no candidate.

Southern Baptists and Political Action

Probably the Southern Baptists are the most active religious group in state politics. Although Baptist doctrine extols separation of church and state, scores of Baptist state associations regularly send petitions and resolutions to state legislatures. The influence of these associations and of the state church papers (which in the lower income groups of some regions reach more homes than daily newspapers) is well known by American historians who have studied the anti-evolution and temperance fights. The question now is whether this same influence and this precedent of political action can be extended to areas of social concern other than the observance of blue laws and temperance legislation.

Denominational Political Programs

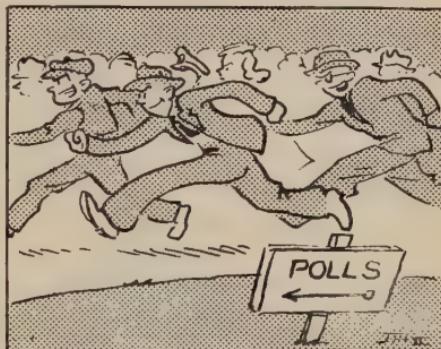
Of the national denominational programs, the Congregational Christian Legislative Committee and the Friends' Committee on Legislation seem to be the most clearly organized for action in Washington. These two committees may represent the pattern of organization which will be followed during the next few years by the denominations which decide

to carry on their political action upon the national stage. They serve as intermediary agents for the church, with power to act swiftly and responsibly—not for the whole denomination, but for the committee only. They are given freedom to speak to the churches as widely as their publicity and educational facilities will allow.

A Washington News Letter for Churches

The Congregational Christian Legislative Committee's main purpose is to keep the "agencies, churches and members of the denomination informed on important issues involved in national legislation." *The Washington Report*, a monthly bulletin which makes its first appearance this month, is the principal medium for this educational job.*

The Washington Report will give ministers and laymen a factual statement of the status, purpose, supporters and opponents of specific bills, a report of the Legislative Committee's judgments on ethical and political issues involved, and recommendation on what political action is needed from church members.



Love your neighbor — and
get him out to vote.

How the Legislative Committee Operates

The secondary purpose of the Congregational Christian Legislative Committee as listed in its original charter is to "act in its own name and on its own responsibility in hearings, public meetings, contacts with Congressional officials and administrative leaders." The Legislative Committee is composed of twelve members who have specialized on various phases of legislation. It includes such people as Frederick Blachly, Brookings Insti-

*Obtainable from the Council for Social Action at fifty cents a year.

tute economist; L. Wendell Hayes, Foreign Economics Administration economist; Carleton R. Ball, agricultural economics expert; etc. The Committee meets at least monthly in Washington. Its chairman is Francis W. McPeek, director of the Department of Social Welfare of the Washington, D.C. Federation of Churches.

Before Tom Keehn, secretary of the Committee, or McPeek can act—that is, go to a congressman or appear at a hearing and say that the Legislative Committee of the Council for Social Action takes such and such a stand on such and such a bill—the Committee must meet, discuss the bill, and agree unanimously, or "nearly so," on a particular position. The Committee has declared itself for a modification of the Chinese Exclusion Act, for federal aid to education, for feeding small European nations, for the Thomas child-care bill, for permanent legislation for the Farm Security Administration (Cooley Bill), for the establishment of the Fair Employment Practices Committee on a permanent basis, for the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Social Security Bill and for consumers' subsidies as a necessary part of effective price control.

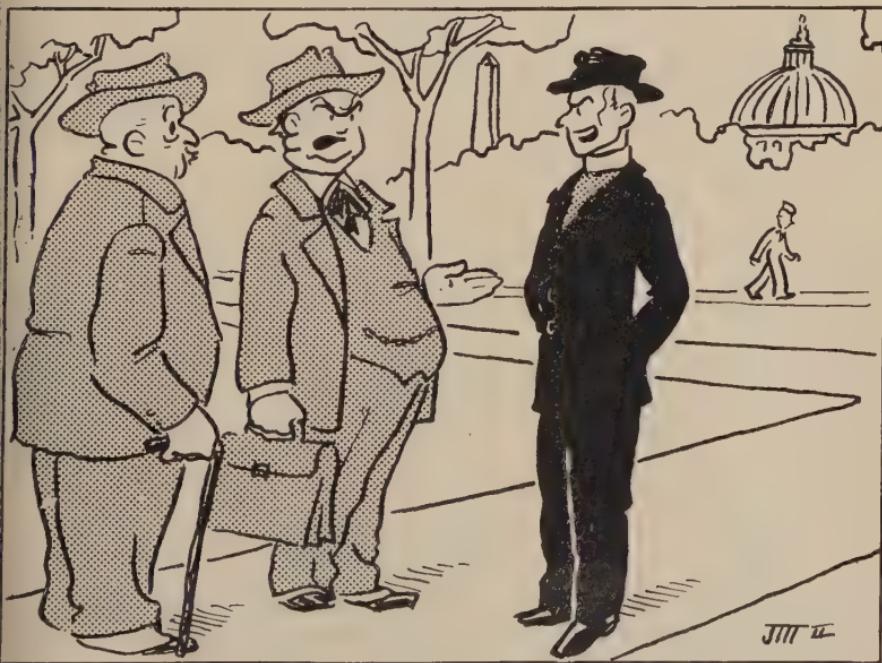
Reaching the Grass Roots

The strength and value of the Legislative Committee will be determined in the next two years by its ability to reach those people in the denomination who will do the grass roots jobs of political action in local communities. Thus far the Committee has worked largely through thirty-eight state committees of the Council for Social Action and has relied upon them to get action from laymen.

In an effort to guide the members of the Congregational Christian Churches in their capacities as citizens a Committee for Christian Citizenship has been formed. Dr. Arthur Bradford of Providence, R. I. is chairman of this Committee. This nationwide, representative body of denominational leaders will commend special projects in the fields of international relations and legislation to the ministers and members of the churches. The

why and how of political action will be stressed through special articles and publications. Effective forms of political action such as those used by the Independent Voter's League of Illinois will be made known; states and local areas will be urged to adopt similar plans.

The organization of the Congregational Christian Legislative Committee seems to fit the pattern of Protestantism. It does not claim that its view is representative either of the denomination or of all Protestantism. It carries on political action in its own name by (1) cooperating with pressure groups on *specific issues*; (2) declaring an ethical and redemptive gospel to them; (3) seeking support from church people and urging their acceptance of political responsibilities.



"A clergyman has no business in Washington. Why aren't you out looking after your flock?"

"I am. I'm after the wolf."

Methodists Build On Bishops' Crusade

The Methodist Church is making a determined effort to use its Bishops' Crusade as a stepping stone to greater political action. The Board of Education in seven conferences across the country called together experts in political and social strategy to plan programs and literature. It was hoped that these conferences would lead to some agency which could centralize Methodist political activity. Nothing has resulted as yet to coordinate in the political field the strength of the Federation for Social Service (an unofficial body), the Women's Society of Christian Service, the Committee on World Peace, the Board of Lay Activities, and others. The educational job which the Methodists are now doing can be a tremendous aid in creating a public opinion favorable to responsible political action. Methodist Fellowship Forums are to discuss such national issues as free enterprise versus government control, sovereignty and world order, and states' rights. One forum session on "What's Coming for Your Community" will help in analysis of local pressure groups and the forces aiding social change.

Interdenominational Political Action

Seen from the standpoint of effectiveness in Washington, the Protestant Churches present one great incoherent mass of conflicting opinion and this often makes them a negligible political force in a country where great blocs of organized opinion count most.

The Federal Council of Churches

The Federal Council may agree on support or opposition to a particular bill in Congress, but that agreement may never reach the state or denominational level. Indeed, in some instances the Council's position has been immediately and publicly repudiated by prominent church leaders. The Federal Council, in good Protestant tradition, attempts to speak to the churches and not for them, believing that primary political action must derive from the concern of denominations. When

the Federal Council appears before a Congressional hearing (as it did, for example, in its pleas for the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Laws) it acts in its own name, not for all of Protestantism. From the standpoint of pressure politics, this will of course always be an inherent weakness of Protestantism.

As is well known, the Roman Catholic Church on the other hand has a large staff and office in Washington to mobilize pressure and to give information. The Catholic political strength comes both from its organization and its coherence of opinion. Since the Federal Council cannot achieve the united front and power similar to the Roman Catholic Church, how far should it attempt to go in political action? Should it remain for the most part a fact-finding organization, or should it attempt to lobby, using what political influence it has? There are churchmen who believe that no church organization should take a stand on particular political issues, let alone use pressure to back up that stand. Such behavior, they argue, creates enmity and disharmony in the Christian brotherhood. Others feel that neutrality on social issues is the most evil kind of side-taking since it leaves the weak at the mercy of the strong in political life.

Thus far the Federal Council has seen fit to devote to legislative matters only a quarterly issue of *Information Service*, edited by Dr. Benson Landis, which "takes no position with respect to bills." It circulates about ten thousand copies. The Council has reached no unanimity of opinion as to whether it should have a Washington office. Yet there seems to be an imperative need for a cooperative program of securing legislative information lest Protestant political action become hopelessly atomized. The Federal Council does lobby in the broader sense of the word, but with reservations. Council representatives have appeared before Congress and its committees from time to time to plead for the continuation of the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC), the feeding of small nations, and the like. Council representatives have been influential in obtaining draft rulings favorable to maintaining the Protestant ministry

and in determination of State Department policy toward Latin America, etc.

Church and State

According to Dr. Roswell Barnes, one of its officials, the Council has been guided in the belief that "the church must avoid alliance with any particular political regime or political institution. To form such an alliance for long would encourage the community to rely too much upon it to the neglect of the ethical and moral disciplines and the redemptive factors that are essential to its success." In other words no political instrument is to be identified with the conception of the Kingdom of God.

Negro Churches in Politics

The Fraternal Council of Negro Churches in America seems to have less reservations about political action than the Federal Council. It maintains a legislative office in Washington, which under Dr. W. H. Jernogin's direction has done notable work in behalf of the Fair Employment Practice Committee, Negroes in the armed services, etc. The Fraternal Council's "Reports to the Nation" savour neither of unfairness or self-regarding race consciousness.

Non-denominational Agencies

Non-denominational agencies operating in the political field include the United Christian Council for Democracy, the United Council of Church Women and the Young Women's Christian Association. The last two organizations cooperate politically with eighteen national women's organizations through the Women's Joint Congressional Committee. This Committee has no paid Washington Staff of lobbyists and researchers, but does work through a volunteer "look-out" committee in Washington.

Where to Now?

If the Protestant churches are serious about political action three tasks must be faced. They must strive toward a Christian

ing we have thought it all over and it came out that way. Some of us vote for "the best man," unmindful of party associates, commitments, policies, simplifying the decision to a matter of fellowship which is more inclusive of all classes in America. They must learn to work with other organized groups in society. They must do the hard, long-term job of getting to local groups and individuals non-partisan information on important political issues. In short, this undertaking must include a radical criticism of the church and its present program, as well as guidance for the nation on important issues of the day.

Bernard DeVoto has said that American people for the first time in decades are afraid. They are afraid of peace, afraid of their future relations with other nations, afraid of internal disaster and discord, afraid of labor revolting, afraid of returning veterans, afraid to trust their own strength.

The church's main responsibility in American politics must not be lost sight of in all its concern for social strategy. It is, as Dr. Richard Niebuhr expressed it, to help give America the ethical resources to meet and conquer her fears and to help her accomplish justice. It is to open the clear springs of redemptive power to American people, so that they may know that they are not without the power to act constructively.

From the Moderator (*Continued from page three*)

personal liking. Some of us claim to be independent, neatly ridding ourselves of responsibility; we fancy ourselves political celibates willing to be sterile for the sake of being pure.

There are moral issues in the present campaign and tremendous moral questions to be settled in the years ahead. It is time for church people to face squarely the implications of their position. "The Congregational Church Goes into Politics" is a mis-statement any way you look at it. But as individuals we are in politics whether we like it or not. We are in, nationally and internationally, as never before. Let us then work at our politics "to please God and serve men."

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